

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British Trade*, &c.

From Tuesday, April 20. to Thursday, April 22. 1714.

The opening a Door for our Manufactures into France, the only way to destroy the French Manufacturing. Strange! that any should oppose so known a Truth.

We all know they could never have raised any Manufactures till they got ours first Loaded with Duties, and then Prohibited.

If those Duties are taken off, they can no more go on, than without it, they could begin.

Strange! What end English men can propose by be-lying their own Country, and running down their own Manufactures.

If to have our Poor work Cheaper, that is to ruin both the Poor and the Manufacture too.

THE *MERCATOR* has laid down another General, which he thinks Cavil it self cannot oppose, viz. That the opening a Door for our Manufactures into France, is the only way to overthrow the French Manufacturing, and the *MERCATOR* adds this to it.

That the Ruin of the French Manufacturing is inevitable, if our Woollen Goods once get a free Admission into France upon the Foot of the Tarriff of 1664.

It can hardly be conceived that any can have the Face to deny this, and less, that if it be granted they should have the Face to oppose such proper Measures as are taken to assist the Merchants to get their Manufactures into France.

By getting them into France, is to be understood getting off the high Duties in France, so that they may come in there upon Saleable Terms; that they may stand upon some reasonable Foot of Equality, or at least of Proportion with the French, that so the Goodness of our Goods, and the inferior Quality of the French, may be put upon the Proof, and may have the usual and desired Effect, that the Consequences of both may work and may appear.

Were this once done, we should soon see what kind of Rivals the French would be to our Manufactures, and how well they would be able to maintain their own without us.

If they had been able to do any thing considerable in the Woollen-Trade, how came it to pass they did it not before the last War, when the Interruptions of Commerce gave them the Advantage, or before 1667. when the high Duties began?

If they could not begin till the high Duties were laid on, how shall they go on when those high Duties are taken off? Again, if they can go on now, tho' the high Duties should be taken off, how came it to pass that they could make nothing of it before they were laid on?

To magnify the French Manufactures and their Works, can never, how much soever it is the Fashion now, come to any thing if this cannot be answer'd.

The *MERCATOR* has given something of its due to this Treacherous Temper of running down our own Manufactures, and crying up the French. But what shall be said to the Truth of the Fact? It is a villainous, base Thing for English men to do, if it were true; and it is no wonder to find Naturaliz'd Foreigners are the Scriblers in the Case; for no doubt but it was hard to find an English Man that could be guilty of such a piece of unnatural Treason in Trade: On the other Hand, what can be said of this piece of Work, if it appears to be all false in Fact, if the French Manufactures have not that Intrinsick we speak of, and are but sorry ill-perform'd Stuff, made of mixt unsorted, or ill-sorted Materials, that they have nothing to support them but the Accident of the War, viz. the high Duties and Prohibitions on the English Goods, and that as they could not at first go on, till those high Duties were laid on; so they cannot now continue, if those Duties were taken off. If this be the State of the Case, then these Men have acted that part of all the possible Treacheries in the World, which ought to render them the most Odious and Contemprible in the Eyes of their own Country-men, and of all that love or wish the Prosperity of these Nations.

The *MERCATOR* would be glad to hear these Men tell us what they propose by their saying and telling the World, that the French can make our Manufactures as good as our People can make them, and can undersell them? What End can they be supposed to answer by it, for all Men act to some End or other, or else they are a new sort of Creatures which we have not heard the like of?

Now what End can these Wretches propose to themselves, and to the Nation, by telling them, that the French can make the Woollen-Manufactures as good as we can, and can underwork and undersell us?



What will these Men say for it? Is it to bring us to contrive to make our Manufacture Cheaper than we do? If so, let them answer it to the Poor, who think they work cheap enough, and live hard enough already; and who, as has been said already, in a Proportion to their Work, the Goodness and Quantity of what they perform, do already work as Cheap, and make their Manufactures as Cheap as any People in the World, and indeed much cheaper; to propose to have the poor People in some parts of England work cheaper than they do in our Manufactures, would be to starve them; Nay, in many Parts of England the Manufactures are wrought by those whose Bread does not depend upon their Labour, such as Women and Children, who are kept by their Husbands or Parents, by other Means, and who work in the Manufactures, Print, Spin, Card, &c. as an Extraordinary; whereas if they were pulst to live wholly on it, they would perish for want of Bread: In many Parts of this Nation the Poor cannot gain above Three-half-pence, Two-pence and Three-pence a Day, no not by working very hard.

Would these Men have this Work wrought Cheaper? What can they say they would have the Poor do? And what do they think the Poor would do with them, if they knew them? Do not our Poor live hardly enough, what would they have? Would they have them come to Wooden Shooes and Broth without Flesh? What are these Men doing? And what would they have the Poor of this Nation brought to?

Or will these Men alledge that old worn out Notion, that Cheapness causing Consumption, it is our Interest to make our Manufacture as Cheap as they can be made any where, that the Quantity may go off? This is still to ruine our Trade, unless they will undertake to make them at the same time equally Good as they were before, and that cannot be: It is our Trading Interest to keep our Manufactures up in Goodness to their known Standard, that as they now do, they ever may exceed all the World; if once we sink their Goodness, we dishonour our Manufacture, and sink the Trade.

As they do now exceed all the Manufactures in the World of the same kind in their real Goodness, so they are as Cheap in proportion to that Goodness as it is possible to make them, unless we starve our poor labouring People, and much Cheaper, set the Goodness against the Price, than any other Manufactures of the same sort in the World.

Either then these Men would have the Poor work Cheaper, or the Manufacture made worse; either of which is ruinous to Britain: The first would ruine our People, the next would ruine our Trade.

It is true, that our People, generally speaking, live better, and earn more Money than the French, or than the labouring Poor of any other Nation. But then it is true, that they do more Work than the Poor of any Nation of the World do or can do.

Now it is not saying, let the Poor live harder, let them fare as the Poor in France, or in Scotland, or in Germany fare; I say, this is saying nothing to the purpose, for the Nature of the thing will detect it.

Why do our People fare better, &c.? It is because they do more Work; And why do they do more Work than other Nations? It is because they fare better. Englishmen and Britains are made of the same Composition as other Nations; if they were starv'd, and lived hard, as other Nations do, they would be able to do no more Work than other Nations do; and if the Poor of other Nations fed as they feed, they would Work as these Work: If an Englishman was to Dine on a piece of Bread and an Onion, or a piece of dried Fish and a Chaw of Tobacco, or a Snuff, and drink Water, he

would do no more Work than those People who live so; nay, it is very probable, that if Englishmen were fed so, they would not do with that feeding so much Work as the poor People who are obliged to feed so do perform; nay, they would languish and starve with the keeping that others Work with; but, at least, they would not Work better. As it is true, that our Poor living well do earn more Wages, so it is true, that their living so well is the Cause that they are kept in Heart, and their Strength supported to do so much Work.

He then that would have our People live harder, would make them do less Work and ruine them that way. To lower their Wages, is to make them live worse, and to make them live worse, is to lessen their Labour.

Likewise to lower the Wages for our Poors Work, is the ready Way to destroy our Manufacture. The Honour of the English Woollen Manufactures is upheld by its real Goodness, in which it excels the whole World. Now whoever he is that would lessen the Goodness of our Manufacture, ruins our Trade, levels us with our Neighbours, and makes them our true Rivals in Trade, nay, puts them upon even Terms with us.

To lower the price of the Wages of the Poor, is of consequence to lessen the Value of their Goods, for this will be for ever true in Trade, that the less Wages you give, the worse Work shall be done: It is the goodness of our Wages which we give above other Nations, which makes the Work our People do excel that of other Nations; and we no otherwise give better Wages; for, as before, in proportion to the Goodness of our Goods, they are made Cheaper by Englishmen than by any Nation in the World.

If then we must Work cheaper we must Work worse, and what must be the Consequence of this, but taking off that Superiority of the English Manufacture by which it exceeds the whole World, and levelling it with others, or indeed laying it below them.

Thus which way soever we go, we see the Objection meets us; they that would have our People live lower, or our Manufactures made worse, are equally guilty of giving away our Trade to the French, and of Betraying our Country to the Enemies of our Commerce. What have these Men then to answer for to God and their Country, who are thus giving up the Poor and the Trade? We shall see in our next what they give them us for, which is as black a Case as the other.

It is worth enquiring also, what are their Pretences for so gross a piece a Delusion as this, of perswading us not to let our Manufactures go into France: They alledge Two things, and the *MERCATOR* thinks they are equally absurd, at least both serve to shew us how easily our poor People are to be abused and deluded; and what harden'd Faces our Deluders have who are not asham'd to put such Absurdities upon us, and press our poor People to believe them.

1. They alledge, that if the Trade was open, the French want none of our Goods, and would not take them; and yet we find in every Days Entry at the Custom house, great Quantities sent to France, notwithstanding the high Duties still remain; which is but an ill Confirmation of what these Men alledge.

2. They pretend, that in Return the French would Over-balance us: The first of these is false to a Demonstration; the second in our Power to prevent, as has been proved in the last *MERCATORS* sufficiently. But both these may be spoken farther to in our next.

